



## THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

### FAQ'S ABOUT THE NEW SEWER RATE STRUCTURE FOR NON-RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMERS

On June 8, 2004, the City of San Diego City Council adopted a new sewer rate structure for non-residential customers to be implemented on October 1, 2004. Each water account includes one or more water meters. The sewer billing rate for each meter is determined separately, based upon three factors: (1) The **Percent Return to Sewer**, calculated as the water delivered to the facility through the water meter less any water lost from the facility as evaporation, irrigation, or in products leaving the site; (2) Concentration of **Total Suspended Solids** in the wastewater; and, effective October 1, 2004, (3) **Chemical Oxygen Demand (COD)** of the wastewater. Incorporation of COD into the rate structure will help the City meet certain requirements of the Clean Water Grant Program and the State Water Resources Control Board's State Revolving Fund Loan Program.

Revenues derived from sewer fees and charges are used solely for the purpose of defraying costs incurred to provide sewer collection and treatment services. These costs include sewage transportation, treatment and disposal; facilities and equipment maintenance; capital projects; and related financing. The new rate structure provides for a more equitable distribution of costs among the various classifications of sewer customers.

#### What is Chemical Oxygen Demand?

COD is an indirect measure of the amount of oxygen consumed by organic and inorganic matter in water to convert it to carbon dioxide and water. COD is used to test the strength of wastewater that is either not biodegradable or contains compounds that inhibit activities of microorganisms. Similar dischargers are placed into categories and assigned characteristic sewage strengths based on type of business activity.

#### How is a classification category assigned?

Non residential customers are divided into customer classes based on the type of business activity they perform. Using State guidelines, each type of business activity is assigned an average COD value which is then used to determine the sewer billing rate for all customers in that classification.

#### What if you disagree with a classification assignment or you believe your wastewater does not conform to the average values used to determine the billing rate for your classification?

There is an appeal process available to anyone who disagrees with assigned values for any of the three variables used to determine billing rates: COD, TSS, or Percent Return to Sewer (FLOW). However, substantial engineering data and/or laboratory reports must be submitted to support the contention that the meter should be reclassified. A list of accredited labs is available at [www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/ls/elap/html/lablist.htm](http://www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/ls/elap/html/lablist.htm). There is an appeal application fee of \$100, due when the appeal application is submitted.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION** and/or to request an appeal packet please contact:

CITY OF SAN DIEGO

SEWER CLASSIFICATION PROGRAM

600 'B' STREET, Ste 1200

San Diego, CA 92101

Or, you may phone, fax, or e-mail your packet request:

Phone (619) 533-4159

Fax (619) 533-5300

E-mail: [lmontgomery@sandiego.gov](mailto:lmontgomery@sandiego.gov)

#### Customer Support Division • Water Department

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☒ Field Services & Investigations • 600 B Street, Suite 1200, MS 912 • San Diego, CA 92101-4588

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